

Who decides where to draw the line?

The Washington State Senate recently passed a measure barring the sale of sexually oriented tapes and CDs to minors.

Touchy, right? You bet. One can hear the arguments now:

It's time to draw the line!

Who gives you the right to draw the line?

We're in moral decay — we must draw the line somewhere!

Okay, where? Who decides *where* to draw the darn thing anyway?

And round and round we go, again. When it comes to a decision affecting this country's rights, it always boils down to the same argument. The trouble is, no one is ever absolutely right; both sides, at the same time, offer winning and losing points.

The measure would expand present law now banning the sale of erotic printed materials, films and photographs to minors so that it includes musical recordings. It passed the Senate with a 35-9 vote after receiving a near-unanimous vote in the House. It will now go to Gov. Booth Gardner.

So what would define sexually explicit lyrics? In this instance, the group 2 Live Crew's words would serve as a prime example. The bill came in response to an Everett, Wa. mother who complained about her son repeating "obscene" language he'd learned from one of the group's recordings.

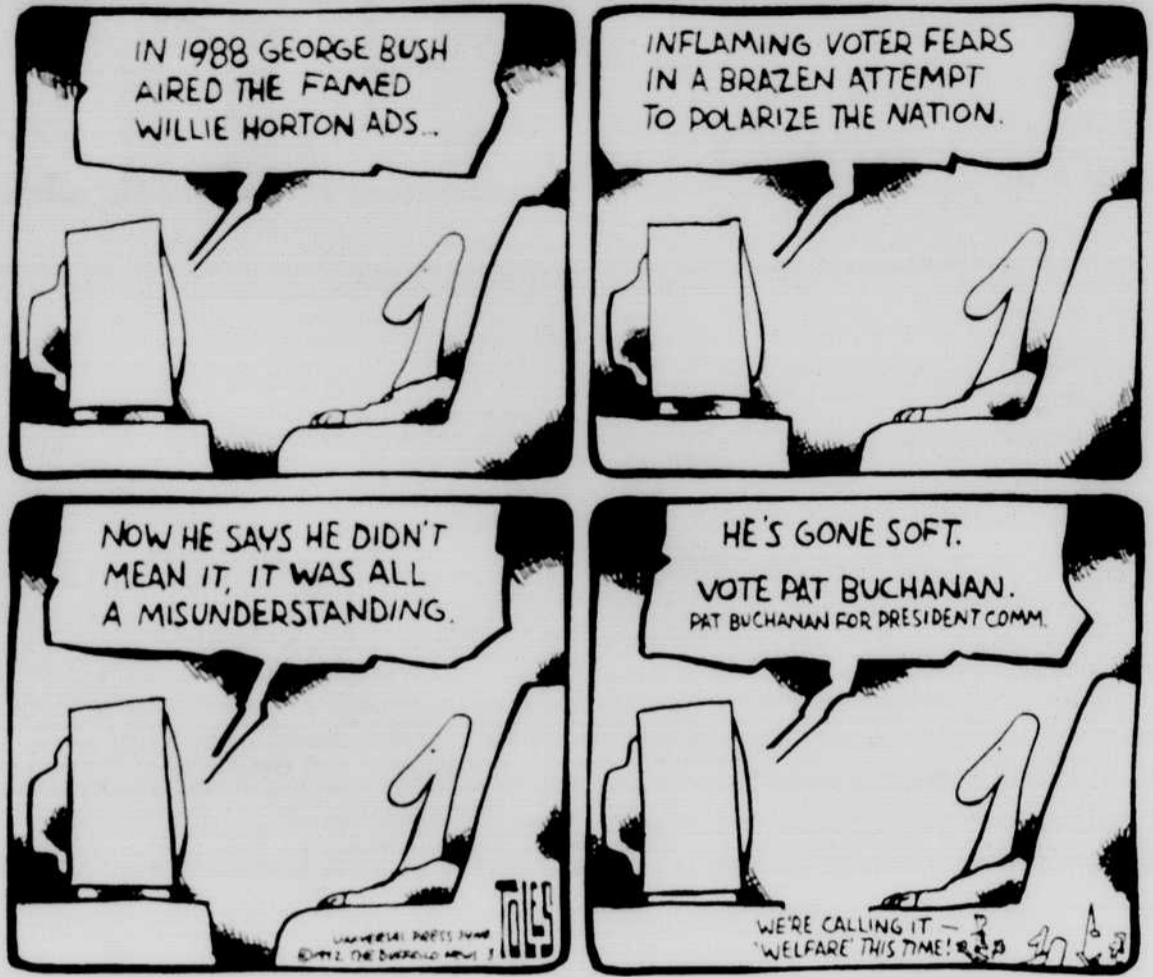
Now here's where it gets sticky. Point number one: It is correct to wonder just what a child, here defined as a "minor," is or isn't able to handle; what is or isn't healthy for a child to be exposed to. Laws surrounding children should ideally protect them from what they supposedly are not ready to experience.

Now, number two. As stated above, who will decide where to draw the obscenity line? Just what will constitute "sexually explicit" material? Everyone knows everyone has a different opinion. On everything. So whose will take the cake? Applied to 2 Live Crew's lyrics, what one person might find offensive another may find acceptable.

It's not for one to judge right or wrong, it's merely a fact that there are as many ways to see an issue as there are people. Room must be made for various opinions. And that's where drawing lines gets hard.

It gets dangerous when The Law decides to play God. When these folks get to say the final yea or nay on what goes instead of the individual, it's scary. Then again some Americans some imposed restraint.

Final answer? Hard to say. You decide.



LETTERS

Concerns

An open letter to Barbara Roberts:

As I prepare to graduate in June, I have become increasingly aware that other women from low-income families, like myself, will not have the opportunity to get a quality, affordable education.

I can't speak for all colleges in Oregon, but the University has suffered because of the cutbacks resulting from Measure 5. I came to the University to attend graduate school in counseling psychology because it's known as one of the best in the country.

However, with the uncertainty of funding, I believe the quality of this program, and other programs at the University, will decrease. It seems likely students will pay for an education in schools outside of Oregon if there continues to be a lack of financial support for high-quality education in this state.

I would encourage you to call a special session to allow the forming of a bipartisan solution that would restore the University's financial integrity and the necessary commitment of Oregon's financial resources to education. I would support re-prioritizing state expenditures that would put foundation funding for the Department of Education before additional capital project funding for the Department of Transportation. I prefer to have our taxes spent on education rather than cutting through national parks to build new roads.

I would appreciate it if you would share my concerns with the Ways and Means committee. Thank you for your work. I look forward to hearing from you and keeping informed

Theresa Scott
Student

Support

In a commentary in the Feb. 4 *Emerald*, Phil Zuckerman of the Jewish Student Union attacked the *Student Insurgent* for publishing anti-Semitic arti-

cles. All the articles Zuckerman cited regarded the history and policies of the Israeli government and the nature of Zionism as a political creed. Though Zuckerman did not mention the name of their author, all of the articles in dispute were written by Gary Murrell, a graduate student and graduate teaching fellow in the history department.

We are faculty members of the history department, Jewish and non-Jewish, who wish to go on record in defense of Murrell's integrity and rebut accusations of anti-Semitism made against him.

We do not all agree with Murrell's views on the Middle East. We wish to affirm, however, that while Murrell's articles are unmistakably anti-Zionist, they are not, in either substance or intent, anti-Semitic. Criticism of the Israeli government, indeed criticism of Zionist principles themselves — however stringently or militantly expressed — must not, ipso facto, be confused with ethnic hatred of Jews.

We believe the debate on this campus regarding Israel, the Middle East and Palestinian rights can be and ought to be conducted in terms of political argument, without resorting to unwarranted charges of ethnic bias on the part of people taking part in that debate.

Edwin R. Bingham
Howard Brick
Matthew Dennis
Jack P. Maddex Jr.
Jeffrey Ostler
Daniel A. Pope
Quintard Taylor
Glenn A. May
Bryna Goodman
Randall McGowen
Mavis Mate
History Dept.

Money

What will Myles Brand think of next? First he spends money to send out a letter announcing something that could have just as easily been published in the *Emerald*. I presume that this expensive (postal fees, paper, printing costs...) form of com-

munication probably didn't improve the turnout.

But now he wants me (and all of us) to spend \$1 in order to trade places with him. Where is all that money going to? And what will the one student chosen actually learn from the experience?

Debra Frye
Student

To choose

Hats off to the University Bookstore's board of directors for taking a firm stand against censorship in their decision to not remove pornographic literature from their shelves.

Being personally opposed to violence done from one human to another in any form, I do, however, regret that Men Against Rape and the Women's Center continue to make the illogical decision equating correlation with causality in their arguments. Some rapists may have perused pornographic material in the past, but I would imagine it was probably something depicting physical acts of cruelty against women. *Playboy* and *Penthouse* are not examples of such material.

The facts are that many, many more men will look such magazines over and not commit any acts of violence. Do the victimized pasts of a certain minority justify inflicting their will upon a harmless majority? Tracing backward in the lives of deviant persons is a dangerous game, for there will be many unusual and unexpected connections for these people to their crimes, which would not appear in the non-deviant, non-violent population.

Finally, freedom of speech also means freedom to choose: If you don't like pornography, nobody is going to force you to read it. In our country, we are free to turn knobs and dials and pick what we want to read, see and listen to. I value my right to choose infinitely more than your biased opinion of what I can choose from.

Timothy Leyden
History
Psychology

LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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